**CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT**

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Statement of President Lyndon B. Johnson dated 2 December 1967

I believe history will record that on this day 25 years ago, mankind reached the turning-point of his destiny.

The Book of Genesis tells us that, in the beginning, God directed man to:

"Be fruitful, and multiply, and to replenish the earth, and subdue it ..."

But only in our lifetime have we acquired the ultimate power to fulfill all of that command. Throughout history, man has struggled to find enough power -- and to find enough energy -- to do his work in the world. He domesticated animals, he sold his brother into slavery, and enslaved himself to the machine -- all in a desperate search for energy.

Desperation ended in the experiment conducted in Chicago, 25 years ago, by Enrico Fermi and by his fellow scientists. In a single stroke, they increased man's available energy more than a thousand-fold.

They placed in our hands the power of the universe itself.

Nothing could have been more appropriate than the words that were used by Dr. Arthur Compton to describe what happened on that day:

"The Italian navigator has just landed in the new world."

This modern "Italian navigator" was a great man of science. But he was also something more. He was one of millions who, in the long history of the world, have been compelled to leave a beloved native land to escape the forces of tyranny. Like millions before him, Enrico Fermi found here a new home, among free men, in a new world. His life and career have a special meaning to all who love freedom.

There are today millions of young Americans with an Italian heritage who feel a deep personal pride in Enrico Fermi. America was born out of the voyages of a great Italian navigator. In a time of greatest danger, another -- equally willing to pursue his dream beyond existing charts - took us into a new epoch.

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Today we commemorate our debt to him. And in doing so, we also honor the historic bond between the old world and the new.

In a short time, we will be dedicating, in Illinois, a new national accelerator laboratory. This laboratory, with its 200,000 million electron-volt accelerator, will maintain our country's position in the forefront of nuclear research.

And I suggest that we dedicate this great new laboratory to the memory of the modern-day "Italian navigator".

In so honoring Enrico Fermi, we will also honor the immeasurable contributions made, over the centuries, by the people of Italy to the people of the United States.

Much has already happened in that new world which began 25 years ago.

Giant nuclear reactors, direct descendants of Fermi's first atomic pile, are producing millions of kilowatts of power for peaceful purposes. Other reactors are powering nuclear submarines under the seas of the earth -- our first line of defense against tyranny, whatever its contemporary doctrine or disguise, which Enrico Fermi dedicated himself to resist.

But it is really the peaceful uses of atomic energy about which Enrico Fermi would have wished us to speak -- and they are many.

When I became President, nuclear energy was generating about 1,000,000 kilowatts of electric power in the United States.

Today, the atom is giving us more than 2,800,000 kilowatts -- almost three times as much. And more than 70 additional nuclear power plants are already planned or under construction.

This will equal about 20 per cent of the whole electric generating capacity in the United States today. It is enough to meet the total requirements of 45 million people. All this from what was, 25 years ago -- before the success of Fermi's experiment -- only a scientist's dream.

The dream has been realized. By learning the secret of the atom, we have given mankind -- for the first time in history -- all the energy mankind can possibly use.

It took the genius of countless generations of dedicated scientists to find the secret, and it remains to us to use it wisely.

What began as the most terrible instrument of war that man has even seen, can become the key to a golden age of mankind. But this will not happen unless we make it happen.

We cannot forget that another, darker future also opened on this day, 25 years ago.

The power to achieve the promise of Genesis is also power to fulfill the prophecy of Armageddon. We can either remake life on earth or we can end it forever.

Let me be specific.

If Enrico Fermi's reactor had operated ten thousand years, it would not have produced enough plutonium for one atomic bomb.

Today, a single reactor can, while generating electricity, produce enough plutonium to make dozens of bombs every year. And scores of these reactors are now being built all over the world.

Their purpose is peaceful. Yet the fact remains that the secret diversion of even a small part of the plutonium they create could soon give every nation power to destroy civilization -- if not life on this earth.

We cannot permit this to happen.

Nor can mankind be denied the unlimited benefits of the peaceful atom.

We must find a way to remove the threat while preserving the promise.

The American people made their own desires crystal clear when their representatives in the United States Senate voted unanimously to support an effective nonproliferation treaty for nuclear weapons.

We are now engaged in a major effort to achieve such a treaty, in a form acceptable to all nations.

We are trying to assure that the peaceful benefits of the atom will be shared by all mankind -- without increasing the threat of nuclear destruction.

We do not believe that the safeguards we propose in that treaty will interfere with the peaceful activities of any country.

And I want to make it clear to the world that we in the United States are not asking any country to accept safeguards that we are unwilling to accept ourselves.

So I am, today, announcing that when such safeguards are applied under the treaty, the United States will permit the International Atomic Energy Agency to apply its safeguards to all nuclear activities in the United States -- excluding only those with direct national security significance.

Under this offer the Agency will be able to inspect a broad range of U.S. nuclear activities, both governmental and private, including the fuel in nuclear reactors owned by utilities for generating electricity, and the fabrication and chemical reprocessing of such fuel.

This pledge maintains the consistent policy of the United States since the beginning of the nuclear age.

Just 14 years ago, a President of the United States appeared before the General Assembly of the United Nations to urge the peaceful use of the atom. President Eisenhower said on that occasion:

" ...The United States pledges...before the world...its determination to help solve the fearful atomic dilemma -- to devote its entire heart and mind to find the way by which the miraculous inventiveness of man shall not be dedicated to his death, but consecrated to his life."

We renew that pledge today. We reaffirm our determination to dedicate the miraculous power of the atom, not to death, but to life.

We invite the world's nations to join with us.

Let us use then this historic anniversary to deepen and reaffirm the search for peace.

Let us so conduct ourselves that future generations will look back upon December 2, 1942 -- not as the origin of sorrow and despair -- but as the beginning of the brightest, most inspiring chapter in the long history of man.